

# RAPID TO-DOS

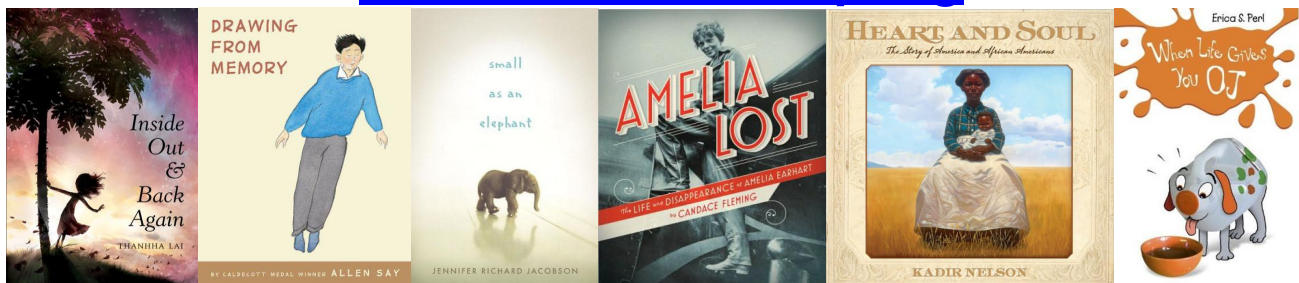
with selections from the 2012-13 DCF list

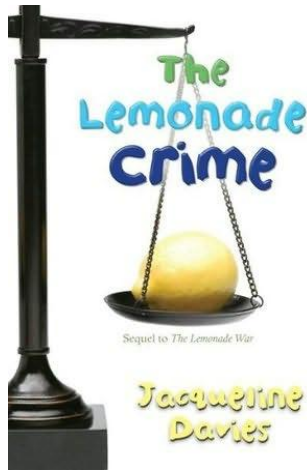
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# **The Lemonade Crime**

By Jacqueline Davies  
Houghton Mifflin, 2011

## **Activities**

### **1) LEGAL STUDIES**

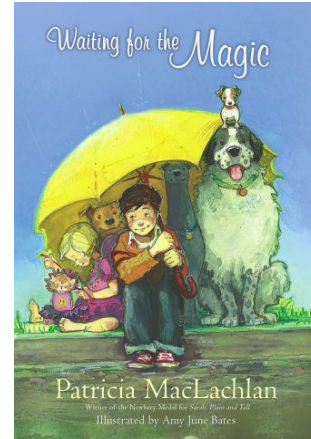
Jessie does a great job at organizing a trial for the entire fourth grade class. What other crimes might be brought to trial using her format? Remember that the players at this trial are young children, so avoid violent crimes that would obviously require adult intervention.

### **2) DRAMA**

Revise and reenact the trial that Jessie prepared in *The Lemonade Crime*. As Jessie's preparation was so extensive, this would be a great starting point for your trial. Make any additions or deletions that you deem necessary. Hand out cards to judge, witnesses, lawyers, defendant, plaintiff and audience members. Use some of language from Jessie's mother's brochure to help the judge and lawyers use proper legal terminology (see pages 89- 117). As the children were rushed at the end, your trial might involve more time for closing arguments and deliberation.

# ***Waiting for the Magic***

By Patricia MacLachlan  
Atheneum, 2011



## **Activities**

### **1) TO DISCUSS**

Gran tells William (pp.43-44) that he is perhaps not old enough, young enough or brave enough to believe in the magic. The part that gets William thinking is not being brave enough. What does it mean to not be brave enough to believe in the magic? Are you brave enough?

### **2) LANGUAGE ARTS**

In *Waiting for the Magic*, some of the characters are able to hear what the dogs and cat say.

If you only had one opportunity to have a conversation with your pet, what would you like to ask? What things do you think your pet would most like to know? Write out this conversation between you and your pet.

### **3) LANGUAGE ARTS**

Write a story about "The Whining Fairy who spits in your face while you sleep" (p.99).

### **4) DRAMA**

**Charades:** play charades with the group, using titles that connect with any of the themes in "Waiting for the Magic"- talking animals dogs, writing, cats, fairies, magic, babies, grandparents, etc. Use list of books with talking animals provided or have the group come up with their own titles.

# Okay for Now

By Gary D. Schmidt  
Clarion, 2011



## Activities

### 1) ART

The paintings of Audubon play an important part in *Okay for Now*. Doug has an immediate and strong reaction to each of the pictures he sees, beginning with the Arctic Tern.



<http://prints.encore-editions.com/0/500/audubon-vi-seabirds-artic-tern.jpg>

How does this painting make you feel? Describe your gut reaction.  
Doug's reaction is on pages 19-20.

## 2) ART

Mrs. Windemere's kitchen is described in great detail on p. 49:

*"The floor was white and yellow tile-- twenty-four tiles wide, eighteen tiles long.  
One rack with sixteen copper pots and pans hanging over a woodblock table.  
Four yellow stools around the woodblock table.*

*Twelve glass cupboards-- all white inside. You could have put my mother's  
dishes into*

*any one of these and you would have had plenty of room left over.  
And the dishes! All white and yellow. And the glasses!  
Who knows how many? All matching. Not a single one chipped.'*

Using this description to get you started, draw your version of the kitchen.

## 3) WRITING & DISCUSSION

Read *The Ok Book* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (HarperCollins, 2007).

What does being "ok" mean to you? What makes you feel okay or not okay?

Doug often feels that just when things are going well for him, something bad will surely follow.

Does "Okay for Now" work as a title for this novel?

Share your thoughts.

# Storm Runners

By Roland Smith  
Scholastic, 2011



## Activities

### 1) WRITING EXERCISE

*Storm Runners* is clearly a cliffhanger. Although *the Surge* and *Eruption* are already published, write the first few paragraphs of the sequel to *Storm Runners*. Would you complete the action in just one sequel, or would you write a trilogy?

Writing prompt for this exercise- last section of *Storm Runners*:

Momma Rossi put her arms around her. "It's just a house. We can rebuild a house. Did you see Poco up there? He jumped out of my arms and disappeared into the night." Rashawn was about to say something, but Nicole cut her off. "We didn't see him," she said. "I'm sure he's fine."

"I'm sure your father's fine too," Momma Rossi said. "He'll be back now that the storm's over."

"It's not over," Chase said. "We're in the eye of ---".

His words were cut off by a gust of wind slamming into the metal building. Pet pulled on her chains and threw hay and sawdust over her back with her gray trunk.

"That wind's going to scare the baby right out of her," Momma Rossi shouted above the noise.

Chase glanced again at the door. The water was rising.

### 2) WEATHER REPORT

Choose a natural disaster. Give a 30-45 second weather report about it. Pretend to point at the green screen that weather people must use.

### **3) DEBATE**

Nicole and her family run a circus with live animals. Circuses of this type are very controversial as the use of animals for the entertainment of humans is deemed unacceptable by many. The other side of the argument is that these animals love to perform and children need to be afforded an opportunity to see these animals live. Divide the class into two and have them debate both sides of this issue.

### **4) EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

For obvious reasons, Chase is more prepared for a natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood than the average person would ever be. He, his father and Tomas always carry "go bags" that contain everything they might need. We know many of the items that Chase's bag contains (see pages 14, 45, 71, 80, 82 & 85) and that "if he ever saw his father again, he was going to suggest several new items for the go bag" (p.97).

Working in groups, come up with the 10 items that your hurricane "go bag" would contain.

# ***The Running Dream***

By Wendelin Van Draanen

Knopf, 2011



## **Activities**

### **1) FUND RAISING**

Jessica's track team has a car wash and bake sales to raise money for her running leg. What are some other fund-raising ideas, maybe less traditional, that middle or high school students could implement to raise money for an important cause? How would you promote the event?

### **2) SPORTS HISTORY**

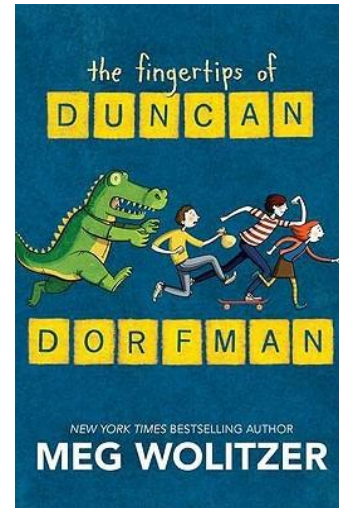
Jessica's coach, Kyro, shows Jessica YouTube videos of athletes who have overcome amputations to become world class athletes. Is Oscar Pistorius a real person? Research an athlete who has had a limb amputated and has become/remained a competitive athlete.

### **3) SPORTS**

Jessica and her team refer to the last turn of any track as Rigor Mortis Bend. Read the effects it has on your body (pp.16-17). Is this a known term that all athletes use to describe the sensation your body feels when you are pushing it really hard? When you are exercising or competing, do you ever feel what Jessica describes? If so, describe how it makes your body feel.

# ***The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman***

By Meg Wolitzer  
Dutton, 2011



## **Activities**

### **1) NAME YOUR SUPER POWER**

Duncan has the ability to read letters with his fingers. He uses his power sparingly in the book- to read a video game manual, to read a sign during an emergency in the dark and perhaps to read Scrabble letters in a bag. What other ways could a power such as Duncan's be used?

If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

How would you use it? For evil or only for good?

### **2) VOCABULARY- 2 LETTER WORDS**

There are 101 acceptable 2 letter words in Scrabble (see pp. 70-74).

Take 5 minutes to write down as many as you think you know.

Bonus points for definitions. See list provided.

### **3) VOCABULARY**

The disease PANOSIS figures prominently in the *The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman*.

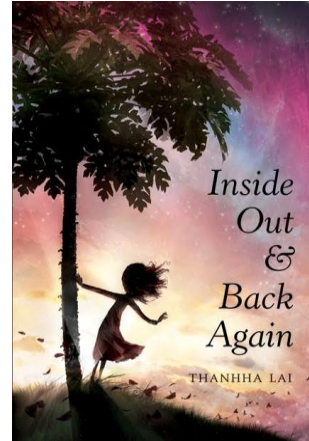
When the definition is given later in the story (p.277), it makes perfect sense that Duncan's father would have been afflicted with panosis.

As Dr. Steve points out (p.230), many diseases end with the suffixes -itis or -osis.

Create imaginary diseases using these suffixes (or others you choose). Give clear definitions for each.

# ***Inside Out and Back Again***

By Thanhha Lai  
Harper, 2011



## **Activities**

### **Poetry**

This is a beautiful, powerful book that uses poetry to tell a rich and challenging story. Here are some activities to bring out the poetic nature of the youth you work with.

- *Poetry to Define Self*: in this book, Lai uses short, direct, but quite lovely and poetic descriptions to describe her characters. Have participants mimic her style and describe themselves and/or people they know. Use page 22, Lai's description of Ha's father as an example:  
He loved stewed eels,  
pate chaud pastries,  
and of course his children,  
so much that he  
grew teary  
watching us sleep.  
  
He hated the afternoon sun,  
the color brown,  
and cold rice.
- *A Wish Poem*: several moments throughout the story, Ha uses poetry to express wishes she has for her and her family. Have participants create a wish poem, expressing their wishes about things, people, occurrences, the world. Use page 30/31 as an example:  
Wish I could do what boys do  
and let the sun darken my skin,  
and scars grid my knees...  
  
Wish Father would come home  
so I can stop daydreaming  
that he will appear

in my classroom  
in a white navy uniform

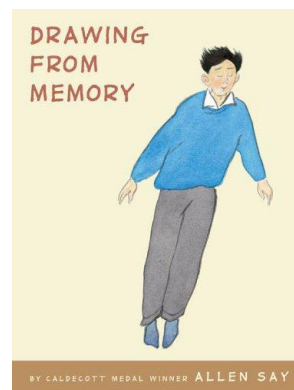
- *Blackout Poetry*: copy a page from a book of prose, any book at all. Give participants pencils and black markers. Tell them to cross out whatever words they wish, leaving behind a poem from the remaining words.
- *Bookspine Poetry*: have participants wander around the library/classroom. Have them “collect” book titles from the spines. Then, have them rearrange the titles into a poem.

### **Understanding Culture and Experience**

- *Mat Exercise*: This is a simple, physical exercise that is a great conversation starter. Begin with two small to medium blankets or pieces of cloth. You could also mark squares on the floor (about 4x4 each). Bring up five volunteers to represent the members of Ha's family. Tell them to first arrange themselves as comfortably as possible on the two mats. Then, bring in a second group of five, or simply remove the second mat if you have a smaller group. Have the original group rearrange themselves to accommodate the new size of their space. To continue, keep reducing the size until the group is as cramped as possible. Debrief the activity. Compare to the ship the family takes to leave Vietnam (page 63).
- *Create a Survival Pack*: Imagine you were going to leave your home and flee to another country. You are told to pack a small backpack with basic clothing, a few hygiene products, small amounts of food, and one choice item. What do you pack?
- *Common and Unique*: Put participants into small groups (3-5). Give each group a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Have the group come up with a list of 10 things they all have in common. They should stretch beyond the obvious commonalities (we are all in this room...). Have the groups share some of their findings. Then have the groups meet again and discover three things that are absolutely unique about each group member, something they share with no one else in the group. Share some of these findings as well.

# Drawing from Memory

By Allen Say  
Scholastic, 2011



## Activities

### Artistic Expression

- *Drawing/Writing/Photography*: In the book, Say and his colleagues discuss often how drawing and writing are similar, they are about discovery and seeing. At one point, Say states that photography feels like “hunting and stealing.” Have participants approach the same subject using these three different forms of expression. One group will photograph the subject, one will write about the subject, and one will photograph the subject. Display each form of expression and discuss what each one was able to capture and what made that form of expression unique.
- *Create a Cartoon YOU*: Say’s sensei creates a cartoon version of Say and incorporates him into his storyboards. This character is a bold, brave version of Say. Say calls upon his cartoon self to give him strength and courage in tough times (page 39 and 50 for examples). Have participants create a cartoon self that holds qualities they find important and enviable. Create a storyboard where their cartoon self has adventures!

### Community Service

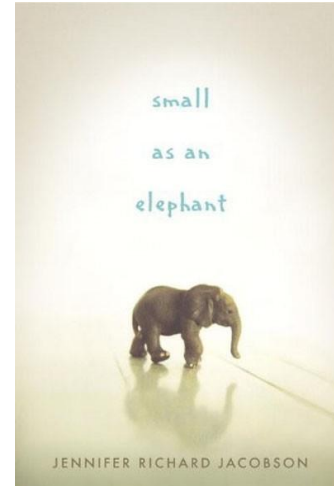
- *Sensei/Apprentice*: This book is less about drawing and art than it is about the amazing bond mentorship can create. Say and Shinpei develop a relationship that expands both of their lives in many ways. Here are two possibilities for encouraging a similar exchange:
  - Identify community partners/leaders/members that would take on youth apprentices. Pair participants with mentors in fields/activities they are passionate about. Have them write about their experience.
  - Have participants identify the skills they feel most confident about. Facilitate a program where youth mentors teach younger children a skill, developing workshops to pass their knowledge on to their younger partners. Have them write about what it felt like to share a skill with someone.

### Life Skills

- *Following a Dream, Embracing the Journey*: There is a gorgeous saying repeated throughout the book by Say’s mother and sensei: “Let your dear child journey.” Have participants create a dream map, outlining possible journeys they might take to achieve their dream. This is a wandering map, so it is absolutely fine if it isn’t linear, or comes to dead ends at places. This is a map of exploration.

# ***Small as an Elephant***

By Jennifer Richard Jacobson  
Candlewick, 2011



## **Activities**

### **Social Studies/Geography/Math**

- *Mapping Your Path*: Have participants pick a random city in the US. Then, have them create a map of how they would travel, on foot, from that location to where they live. Have them choose stops along the way. Also, have them figure out how long it would take them to get home if they traveled the route they created.

### **Math/Economics**

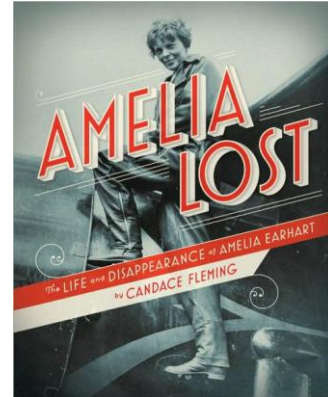
- *Existing on a budget*: \$14.63. This is the amount of money Jack has after his mother leaves. Figure out how long you could survive on only that amount of money. How much would you spend on food? What food would you buy? What would you spend on transportation/shelter? How long could you make \$14.63 last?
- *Trading Up*: Give each participant an identical item. Paperclips work really well for this. Send them off with this item, and tell them they must trade this item, and trade subsequent items, to get the most valuable thing they can. At the end of a predetermined time, participants must return with their final item and explain why it is the most valuable. All the participants vote on who achieved the best trade up to the most valuable item.

### **Life Skills/Drama**

- Jack is left alone, abandoned, and terrified to tell anyone for fear of losing his mother for good. Ask participants to imagine themselves in Jack's situation. What would their course of action be? Would they tell someone? Would they stick to themselves? Role play some of these scenarios, seeing how people respond to the situations.

# ***Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart***

By Candace Fleming  
Schwartz & Wade, 2011



## **Activities**

### **Ice Breaker**

- *Heroes and Dreams and Flying Machines:* Give each participant a piece of paper. Have them write three dreams they have for themselves and three people they consider a hero. Let them know ahead of time that these will be shared. Then, have them use that piece of paper to make a paper airplane. Have everyone stand and launch their airplane. Participants will then pick up the airplane closest to them and launch that one. Keep going, flying dreams and heroes around the room. After a few minutes, each person picks up the closest planes and shares what is written inside.

### **Media Literacy/History**

- *Radio Story:* Have participants create and record a radio broadcast reporting on a significant historical event. Prior to recording, have them research the event and write a script that would be appropriate for radio. As an example prior to recording, share Podcasts of "This American Life" and have participants create a rubric of what makes a successful and powerful radio story.

### **Geography/Travel**

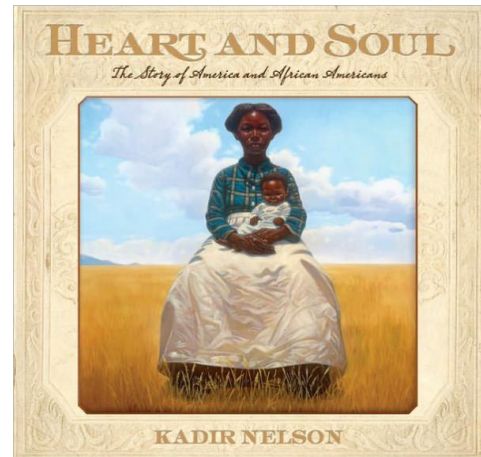
- *Around the World:* Give each participant a world map. Have them choose the route they would take if they were to travel around the world. Each participant should create an itinerary and decide what modes of transportation they would take along the route (plane, train, hike, walk, boat...), and where they would stop along the route.

### **Art**

- *Mobile History:* Create a mobile with images from Amelia's life, including planes hanging down. From the images, hang interesting facts about Amelia and early flight history.

# Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans

By Kadir Nelson  
Balzer and Bray, 2011



## Activities

### History

- *Black Inventors*: Using attached handout, have participants circle which innovations they think were invented by or improved upon by a black inventor. After, ask participants what life would be like without some of these inventions. As an added activity, have them research one of the inventions, paying particular attention to the history of the inventor.
- *Timelines*: at the close of the book, Nelson gives us a timeline of important events in American history.
  - Using these dates and supplemental information from the book, create a visual timeline with images highlighting these key events.
  - Compare Nelson's timeline to a more "traditional" history book. Examine whether the "traditional" book includes the events and perspectives Nelson includes. Discuss how the person telling/writing history affects the way the events are portrayed? Why might there be different versions of the same events?
- *Ancestral Storytelling*: One of the most effective aspects of Nelson's book is that he uses an ancestral voice to communicate the story of black America. Choose a historical event. Imagine a person who may have lived through this event. Write a short retelling of this event in the voice of this person.

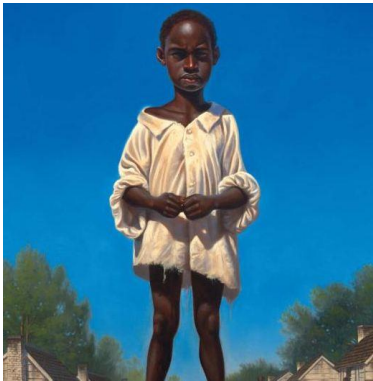
### Humanities/Drama

- *Separate, but (not) Equal*: Divide the group in half, using some random deciding factor like those with brown eyes are in one group and everyone else is in another. Tell each group that they will be asked to perform the same task. If possible, sit one group, Group A, in comfy chairs, or at a table, and then other, Group B, on the floor or at a location with not enough seats for the whole group. Give Group A, fresh, clean paper and ample writing utensils.

Give Group B paper that has writing all over it, that is crumpled, and broken pencils or other utensils. Give each group a book, asking them to read a page and write a brief summary of what they read. Give Group A a book in English. Give Group B a book in another language. If you can, hand out snacks during the activity. Hand a fresh plate of cookies to Group A, and a bag full of broken, maybe even wet cookies to Group B. At they end, ask for each group's paper. Respond to the work given, explaining that both groups, while separate, had equal materials. Let participants respond to what it felt like to be on either side. Discuss as a whole group.

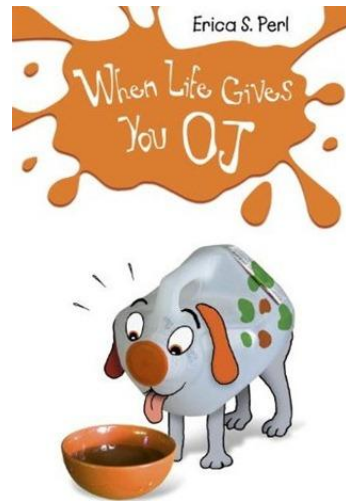
### **Response to Artwork**

- *Nelson's artwork is bold and big and proud.* Copy images from the book, and place them around the room. Have participants, silently, with different colored markers, walk around the room viewing pictures. Each time they come to an image, have them write a word or phrase that comes to mind, an initial response to Nelson's illustrations. Then share the responses as a group and reflect on the exercise and the words and phrases written.



# When Life Gives You O.J.

By Erica S. Perl  
Alfred A. Knopf, 2011



## Activities

### Language

- *Yiddish Words:* Using the attached handout of Yiddish words, have participants write their best guess for what the words or phrases mean. Afterwards, compare the guesses to the Glossary beginning on page 191 of the book.

### Life Skills

- *Pet-Sitting in Pairs:* Pair participants up. Collect recycled bottles and containers and have each individual pick a container. Each individual will decorate their container, making it a Practice Pet. They will also write down a care regimen of how the Practice Pet should be taken care of. Pairs will then switch Practice Pets. This could be done over a single program, or pets could be taken home to care for. Either way, have pairs intermittently give new instructions using notes, like Ace leaves for Zelly in the book. Have each individual keep a journal of what they do with their Practice Pet, where they took it, what they fed it, how frequently they walked it, etc. At the end of the time, have pairs come together and report on their experience.
- *Caring for a Pet Manual:* Have participants choose a type of animal they would want as a pet. If you have folks who are not animal people, go old-school and have them choose a pet rock, or, even better, a plant. Have them create a manual with information on how to care for this pet, and what they might want to consider when thinking about getting this pet.